



City of San Diego
Development Services Department
Plan Review Division
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Building Newsletter 1-2

Plan Checking Policy: Preparation of Plans and Incomplete Plans

Interpretations of State and Local Building Codes
1994 Uniform Building Code: Chapter 1
Revision Date: January 1996

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I. Preparation of Plans

Section 106.3.2 of the Uniform Building Code, as amended, indicate that the building official may require one or more sets of plans* prepared and designed by a registered engineer or licensed architect, when required for enforcement of any provisions of the Code.

A. Plans must be signed as follows:

1. In accordance with the provisions of the California Business and Professions Code, the plans for all buildings and structures shall be prepared and each sheet thereof shall be signed by a person registered/licensed by the State of California as a civil engineer or architect. The first sheet of the engineering calculations for such buildings and structures shall also be signed by a person registered/licensed by the State of California as a civil engineer or architect. If the registrant is a civil engineer, each sheet of the plans and the first sheet of the calculations shall also bear the seal or stamp of the registrant and the expiration date of the certificate.
 2. If the Alternative Structural Regulations referenced by the State Historical Building Code (Part 8, Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations) are applied, all plans must be prepared under the responsible charge of, and signed by, a licensed architect or structural engineer knowledgeable in earthquake resistant design.
 3. Sheets prepared by a licensed electrical or mechanical engineer or contractor need not, however, be signed as specified above. California Energy Conservation Standards require that electrical and mechanical plans and calculations be signed by a licensee of the State of California. This requirement can be satisfied by the signature of a licensed electrical or mechanical engineer or a licensed contractor operating within the limits of Section 6737.3 of the California Business and Professions Code. This section allows electrical and mechanical contractors to design and install systems for which they have contracted.
- B. The following exceptions to the above requirements for signing of plans may be permitted on the condition that where the buildings and structures excepted hereafter are determined by the building official to deviate from conventional construction provisions for wood frame construction or where the structural stability of such buildings or structures is not evident to the building official, engineering cal-

culations and/or the signature of an engineer or architect registered/licensed by the State of California may, nevertheless, be required. An unlicensed individual may prepare the plans for the following structures:

1. Single-family dwellings of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height.
2. Multiple dwellings containing no more than four dwelling units of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height. However, this paragraph shall not be construed as allowing an unlicensed person to design multiple clusters of up to four dwelling units each to form apartment or condominium complexes where the total exceeds four units on any lawfully divided lot.
3. Garages, or other structures appurtenant to buildings described above, of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height.
4. Agricultural and ranch buildings of wood frame construction, unless the building official having jurisdiction deems that an undue risk to the public health, safety, or welfare is involved.
5. Nonstructural or nonseismic storefronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, or other appliances or equipment and any nonstructural or nonseismic work necessary to provide for their installation.
6. Any nonstructural or nonseismic alterations or additions to any building necessary for the installation of such storefronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, appliances, or equipment provided those alterations do not change or affect the structural system or safety of the building.
7. Pole signs with a sign area of 50 square feet or less and a total of 8 feet or less in height to center of gravity.

If any portion of any structure exempted by this section deviates from conventional construction provisions for wood frame construction as defined by the applicable building code duly adopted by the local jurisdiction, the building official having jurisdiction shall require the preparation of plans, drawings and/or calculations for that portion by, or under the direct supervision of, an engineer or architect registered/licensed by the State of California. The documents for that portion

shall bear the stamp and signature of the registrant/licensee who is responsible for their preparation.

Note that effective January 1, 1986 the classification of "Registered Building Designer" was abolished by state law (AB 2196). The law requires that certificates to practice architecture be issued to any person registered as a building designer on or before January 1, 1986.

II. Incomplete Plans

Section 106.3.3 indicates that plans must be of sufficient clarity to indicate the nature and extent of the work proposed and show in detail that it will conform to the provisions of the Code and all relevant laws, ordinances, rules and regulations.

The plans should be reasonably complete without reference to other documents. Pertinent structural and fire- and life-safety information such as structural material specifications, floor and wall details and door, window and finish schedules should be shown on the plans.

- A. Plans submitted pursuant to the provisions of Section 106.3.2 which are incomplete and/or too unclear for acceptance under the provisions of Section 106.3.3 will be referred back to the applicant for completion and/or clarification. The Development Services Department will not prepare a detailed correction list for such plans, but will inform the applicant of the general areas in which they are incomplete and/or unclear.
- B. When such plans are resubmitted, plan review priority will be established based on the date of resubmittal.

If, upon resubmittal, such plans are found to be incomplete and/or too unclear for acceptance under the provisions of Section 106.3.3, they will again be referred back to the applicant, without a detailed correction list, and the applicant will again be informed of the general areas in which the plans are incomplete and/or unclear.

- C. The above described process of submittal, rejection, resubmittal and establishing of plan review priority will continue until such time as the plans are found by the Development Services Department to be sufficiently complete and clear for acceptance under the provisions of Section 106.3.3 or until such time as the applicant or the Development Services Department refers such plans to the Board of Appeals and Advisors for its recommendation.
- D. If the Board recommends that such plans are sufficiently complete and clear for acceptance under the provisions of Section 106.3.3, the Development Services Department will, following such Board recommendation, begin a complete plan review on such plans and prepare a detailed correction list.
- E. If the Board recommends that such plans are incomplete or too unclear for acceptance under the provisions of Section 106.3.3, the plans will be referred back to the applicant with such notification. In this case, the Board may further recommend that such plans be referred to the appropriate State Registration Board as evidence of incompetent practice.

* Specifications are no longer retained as part of the permanent records, therefore, all references to specifications have been deleted from this building newsletter.